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COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS
Tenth special session
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

SITUATION AND TRENDS IN DRUG ABUSE AND THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC

Sub-Commission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East
Report on the twenty-third session
Vienna International Centre, 3 and 4 February 1988

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CHAPTER I

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

1. The Sub-Commission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, having considered the deteriorating situation with respect to illicit drug trafficking and abuse in the region of the Sub-Commission during 1987, makes the following recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs:

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Bearing in mind the deteriorating situation with respect to illicit drug trafficking and abuse in the area of the Sub-Commission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East during 1987,

A. Reduction of illicit supply of drugs

1. Requests the Division on Narcotic Drugs to facilitate improved international drug law enforcement co-operation in the area of the Sub-Commission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East with emphasis on the strengthening of border control, by the establishment of mechanisms for the speedy and secure exchange of information between drug law enforcement authorities at the local level including the use of such communication tools as telefax;

2. Also requests the Division on Narcotic Drugs in co-operation with the Customs Co-operation Council and Interpol, other interested agencies and organizations and Member States to establish a long-term international drug law enforcement training strategy, aiming at a standardization of training techniques, tools and material. To this end, the Division on Narcotic Drugs, the Customs Co-operation Council and Interpol should co-ordinate their training schedule in different regions;

3. Urges Member States to make increasingly available to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control funds that can be used to support drug law enforcement activities and, in this connection, re-affirms and endorses recommendations II (Strengthening of drug control in the Africa Region), III (Mutual co-operation and technical assistance in the area of drug law enforcement in the Africa Region) and IV (Training for drug law enforcement officers in the Africa Region) of the First Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa Region; recommendation IV (Frequency and expansion of training programmes) of the Thirteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific Region; and recommendation III (Co-operation through training programmes) of the First Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean Region, as also relevant and applicable in the area of the Sub-Commission;

4. Requests the Division of Narcotic Drugs to report to the next regular session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the progress achieved with regard to the implementation of the present recommendations of the Sub-Commission, under a separate agenda item entitled "Improvement of international co-operation".

B. Reduction of illicit demand for drugs

1. Recommends the adoption of a new approach to the illicit drug situation in the region by focusing on and according priority to the study and evaluation of the forms and incidence of illicit drug abuse;

2. Requests the Division of Narcotic Drugs, in co-operation with relevant United Nations offices and agencies, as well as with concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to undertake a regional study of patterns of illicit drug abuse, with a view to bringing about greater awareness and information sharing and providing policy guidance on effective counter-measures;

3. Encourages more funds to be made available for projects, operational at the national and regional levels, for the reduction of illicit demand for drugs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RECENT TRENDS IN THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC

2. In its discussion of this agenda item, the meeting had before it a chart showing the seizures of illicit drugs made in the Near and Middle East from 1979 to 1987 (annex II).

3. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that in spite of the complete eradication of opium poppy cultivation and stringent drug control policies in his country, opium and heroin continued to flow across the eastern borders in large quantities, causing increased heroin addiction and, consequently, great anxiety. Prices of opium and heroin had decreased slightly compared with the previous year, which was thought to be due to greater availability of opiates beyond the eastern borders. The Islamic Republic of Iran's unique geographical position had given rise to a major problem with regard to the transit traffic in drugs of abuse despite strenuous control measures and the imposition of the death penalty in some major cases. No heroin laboratories had been discovered in the country, and the Government exercised complete control over the distribution of acetic anhydride and other acetylating substances. The Government was eager to achieve maximum co-operation in border control with its neighbours through bilateral agreements.

4. The representative of Turkey told the meeting of staggering increases in heroin seizures which had taken place in his country in 1987. Heroin seizures had increased from 97 kg in 1985 and 172 kg in 1986 to 1,347 kg in 1987. While some of this increase could be attributed to improved control measures,

the total quantity was so great that increased illicit trafficking activity must be inferred. Turkey was also experiencing a significant increase in the illicit transit traffic of fenetylline hydrochloride coming across its north-western borders destined for other countries to the south by the overland route. The delegate expressed his wholehearted support for the desire of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to achieve maximum international co-operation between drug law enforcement authorities within the region.

5. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan said that drug addiction continued to increase in his country, which now consumed more heroin than it produced. Opium production in the country had been substantially reduced by crop eradiction and crop substitution programmes, but because of the increasingly well-organized and intensive smuggling of drugs across its north western and western borders, Pakistan was now a serious victim of the international illicit drug traffic. A recent trend was the adulteration of heroin with psychotropic substances, and pure heroin was now comparatively rarely found among seizures. In 1987 there had been seizures of a total of 1,000 kg of Methaqualone, which had apparently been smuggled from India. Pakistan continued to carry out severe drug law enforcement measures, which had resulted in the destruction of 93 heroin laboratories in the source areas of tribal territory between 1985 and 1987. However, the drug abuse and illicit trafficking situation remained serious and the Government was considering the introduction of the death penalty in certain circumstances. He said that his country also was anxious to further improve international drug law enforcement co-operation within the region, and he spoke of the benefit which might be obtained by the exchange, regionally, of drug law enforcement liaison officers.

6. The representative of Sweden said that the illicit abuse of heroin in Sweden was rather stable which, he believed, was the case in most European States, despite very large seizures. However, amphetamine traffic was increasing significantly and might be considered the most serious problem in Sweden. Vigorous action was taken, especially in the fields of prevention and treatment and rehabilitation, to stop drug abuse and the spread of HIV infection. The number of new young drug addicts was still low.

7. The observer from Interpol congratulated the drug law enforcement authorities of Turkey upon their outstanding successes in 1987 against illicit drug trafficking. He then gave an overview of illicit trafficking trends from which it was clear that the situation had not improved, in any way in 1987. Heroin remained the most serious problem in the region, with seizures reaching record levels in most countries. Heroin seizures in Europe in 1987 exceeded 3 tonnes of which 80 per cent was believed to have come from south-west Asia. The drug law enforcement authorities in India had seized 2,864 kg in 1986 and 2,716 kg in 1987. In view of the large quantities of opiates seized within the area of the Sub-Commission and the staggering size of the addict population, Interpol believed that the total illicit opium production in south-west Asia might be as high as 1,000 tonnes. The main sources of that production, however, could not yet be determined with any firm degree of accuracy. Africa played an increasing part as a transit region for illicit drugs from south west Asia to Europe and the United States and nationals of Nigeria had a dominant role in this traffic. Cultivation of opium in Lebanon appeared to be increasing significantly despite control efforts by the Lebanese authorities.

8. The Chairman noted that, from the reports of its members, the drug trafficking situation in the area of the Sub-Commission was closely inter-related with that of some of its neighbours such as India. Perhaps the Sub-Commission might wish to invite some of these other countries to attend the Sub-Commission sessions in an observer capacity. The observer from the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, supported the Chairman's suggestion as he believed that the attendance of other States of the area would be of value to all concerned. The meeting then discussed the question of possible expansion in the Sub-Commission's membership. It was decided that the Sub-Commission itself had no mandate to make any resolution or recommendation on the issue but that other States of the area which had an interest in attending sessions of the Sub-Commission might usefully raise the question through the medium of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

9. The observer from the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) said that his organization was particularly interested in the implementation of practical drug law enforcement measures that would improve border control procedures, especially those which were the function of customs authorities. He particularly had in mind drug law enforcement training, mechanisms for the exchange of operational information and the use of techniques such as controlled delivery and drug scenting dogs. He believed that there was a need for the Sub-Commission to improve its capacity in those areas, and the CCC was prepared to join with Sub-Commission members and other concerned international organizations (United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, Division of Narcotic Drugs and Interpol) in the furtherance of those objectives. He emphasized the positive results that had been achieved in the past from the recommendations made by the Sub-Commission and other regional meetings to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Those recommendations had given rise to extremely valuable Commission resolutions in such matters as information exchange, regional co-operation, controlled deliveries, drug law enforcement training and the development of counter-measures to some specific methods of drug smuggling. Those resolutions had formed the basis for many valuable drug control measures carried out not only by the United Nations and Governments of Member States but also by concerned intergovernmental organizations such as CCC and Interpol.

CHAPTER III

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING, INCLUDING A REVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE MULTIDISCIPLINARY OUTLINE TARGETS OF DIRECT RELEVANCE TO THE AREA OF THE SUB-COMMISSION

10. In its discussions of this agenda item, the meeting had before it the report of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (A/CONF.133/12).

11. Introducing this item the Deputy Director of the Division of Narcotic Drugs drew the attention of the meeting to target 12 (Control of the commercial movement of precursors, specific chemicals and equipment) and target 14 (Identification of illicit narcotic plant cultivation), which related to topics that had been touched upon during the discussions of the present session. He suggested that those two targets, together with all the targets in chapter III, might be considered to be of direct relevance to the area of the Sub-Commission. He told the meeting that although the report was not legally binding upon Member States, many of the provisions of chapter III

would eventually be incorporated in the new international convention against illicit traffic. In answer to a question, the Deputy Director explained that although the report had been endorsed by the General Assembly no additional resources had been made available for its implementation. Many of its objectives, however, were already provided for in the existing programmes of the United Nations drug control organs. One observer suggested that future strengthening of drug law enforcement measures depended particularly upon three areas, namely the improvement of communications between drug law enforcement agencies, the co-ordination of drug law enforcement training efforts and the standardization of drug law enforcement training methods. Several speakers supported that statement.

12. One representative described the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline contained in the Report of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as a significant contribution and emphasized the need to reduce the demand for drugs of abuse as well as to confront the illicit traffic. In that context he suggested that target 1 on due assessment of the extent of drug misuse and abuse was also of great relevance to the area of the Sub-Commission which has need of training in demand reduction techniques and in the conduct of epidemiological studies.

13. On the subject of recommendations one representative drew the attention of the meeting to recommendation I on the international arrangements for the investigation of identified international drug traffic targets, contained in the report of the 1987 Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and Pacific (E/CN.7/1988/8), as being of considerable relevance to the area of the Sub-Commission.

14. In discussing useful ways of improving communications within the region, it was decided that the most effective course was the organization of frequent meetings between operational drug law enforcement personnel. Such meetings should be held as frequently as possible but on an ad hoc basis according to the incidence of major drug trafficking operations rather than a regular basis.

15. One observer suggested that, in framing its recommendations, the Sub-Commission might bear in mind that, in present circumstances, the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control would be unlikely to be in a position to commit additional resources to drug law enforcement activities within the near future. He therefore suggested that recommendations requiring additional resources should be addressed to Governments rather than to the Fund in the first instance.

16. The meeting discussed the question of resources for drug law enforcement at some length. One representative said that the importance of drug law enforcement activities frequently appeared to be underestimated by donor States, which often showed a preference for projects that were clearly more related to economic and humanitarian activity. He suggested that the meeting might best frame its recommendations in such a way as to encourage Governments to increase their contributions to the Fund for use on drug law enforcement projects. In this context of resources one representative recommended that the Division of Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board should be brought back to full strength in order that their programmes might be carried out successfully. The Chairman remarked that this question was one for the attention of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

17. In conclusion of the item, one representative particularly commended to the meeting the following targets from the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline contained in the report of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking for action within the Sub-Commission area:

Target 17. Disruption of major trafficking networks;

Target 21. Admissibility in evidence of samples of bulk seizures of drugs;

Target 22. Adequacy with a view to improved efficacy of penal provisions;

Target 26. Surveillance of land, water and air approaches to the frontier.

The actions specified in the Report for the achievement of those targets would significantly improve the drug law enforcement capability of Governments in the Sub-Commission area, and the meeting therefore agreed that they were worthy of special attention.

CHAPTER IV

OTHER BUSINESS

18. The meeting deferred the issue of a time and place for its next session pending any offer to host it in a capital of the region that might be received at a later date.

CHAPTER V

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION

19. On 4 February 1988, the Sub-Commission adopted, by consensus, the report on its twenty-third session.

CHAPTER VI

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

20. The Sub-Commission held its twenty-third session at the Vienna International Centre on 3 and 4 February 1988. The session was opened by the Director of the United Nations Division of Narcotic Drugs, which acted as secretariat.

B. Attendance

21. The session was attended by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Sweden and Turkey and by observers from United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. A list of participants is given in annex I to the present report.

C. Election of officers

22. The Sub-Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman:	Erdem Erner (Turkey)
Vice-Chairman:	Dilshad Najmuddin (Pakistan)

23. The Chairman thanked the members for the confidence which they had shown in him and outlined the topics that the Sub-Commission might wish to address at its twenty-third session. He also advised the meeting that General Yousef Gharaibeh had recently relinquished the post of Director-General of the Pan Arab Bureau for Narcotic Affairs. He paid tribute to the valuable contribution which General Gharaibeh had made to the work of the Sub-Commission for many years, and he looked forward to the same degree of fruitful co-operation with General Gharaibeh's successor Colonel Hashim Al Qaisi.

D. Agenda

24. The agenda, as adopted by the Sub-Commission, was as follows:

1. Election of officers: Chairman and Vice-Chairman
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Review of recent trends in the illicit traffic
4. Follow-up to the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (ICDAIT), including review of comprehensive multidisciplinary outline targets of direct relevance to the area of the Sub-Commission
5. Other business
6. Adoption of the report of the Sub-Commission

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Members

Iran (Islamic Republic of)	S.H. Fakhr, Ghodratollah Assadi
Pakistan	Dilshad Najmuddin, Sher Afgan Khan
Sweden	Lars Hultstrand
Turkey	Erdem Erner, Balkan Kizildeli, Sabahattin Yirmibesoglu, Namik Evren, Ahmet Yildirim, Sami Soydan

Intergovernmental organizations

International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO/Interpol)	Iqbal Hussain Rizvi
Customs Co-operation Council (CCC)	G.D. Gotschlich

Non-governmental organizations

International Road Transport Union (IRTU)	Karl Meier

United Nations Secretariat units and bodies

Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control

International Narcotics Control Board.

Annex II

Seizures made in the Near and Middle East, 1979-1987

DRUGS	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg
CANNABIS									
Afghanistan	612	513	1,362	1,249	842	2,442	4,642	6,352	- *
Iran,Islam.Rep.	3,451	6,000	5,268	1,641	446	7,157	916 /2	4,401 /2	3,998 /1
Pakistan	35,507	48,619	56,758	52,092	58,515	52,153	135,909	251,581	138,218 /3
Turkey	13,245	7,833	8,859	2,141	2,358	2,493	6,408	3,104	3,837
TOTAL	52,815	62,965	72,247	57,123	62,161	64,245	147,875	265,438	146,053
HEROIN									
Afghanistan	24	-	42	9	446	103	1,242	1,072	- *
Iran,Islam.Rep.	327	500	3,155	739	3,464	2,349	1,774	1,392 /2	1,065 /1
Pakistan	-	9	432	2,392	3,377	2,332	5,510	5,638	4,459 /3
Turkey	48	131	167	71	288	265	97	172	1,347
TOTAL	399	640	3,796	3,211	7,575	5,049	8,623	8,274	6,871
MORPHINE									
Afghanistan	49	32	97	147	13	2	-	-	- *
Iran,Islam.Rep.	204	20	1,206	1,220	1,055	2	42	142 /2	15 /1
Pakistan	6	955	215	70	-	-	-	-	-
Turkey	-	114	102	224	154	100	104	59	343
TOTAL	259	1,121	1,620	1,661	1,222	104	146	201	358
					u.	u.	u.	u.	u.
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	1,813	2,970	560	-	1,941 /3
OPIUM									
Afghanistan	26,413	5,771	10,617	7,473	16,416	5,476	8,325	10,660	- *
Iran,Islam.Rep.	5,648	30,000	21,127	15,057	35,328	28,853	17,445	23,824 /2	16,837 /1
Pakistan	28,516	4,966	11,941	10,209	19,550	8,502	2,382	3,179	5,735 /3
Turkey	338	58	69	98	20	-	2	80	26
TOTAL	60,915	40,795	43,754	32,837	71,314	42,831	28,154	37,743	22,598

*) Not available

/1 First six months
/2 First nine months
/3 First ten months